TOWN & COUNTRY CHURCH

In This Issue

The ninth session of the National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country was held at Columbus, Ohio, October 29-31, 1952. The Convocation is held annually.

This issue presents a report of the addresses made available to us, and digests of the deliberations of all the fourteen commissions.

The Convocation is a most informal type of assembly. All interested in the town and country church may attend. It brings together the persons most concerned so that they may worship together, educate one another and make plans and recommendations.

The various recommendations made by speakers and commissions are made on their own responsibility, and are not official declarations of either the denominations or the state councils or the National Council.

All interested organizations are urged to study, to use, to adopt or adapt what comes out of the sessions of the Convocation.

No. 86

February, 1953

Common Concerns and the Cooperative Approach*

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RALPH L. WILLIAMSON

Cooperation is truly American. The early New England communities were founded by mutual effort, motivated by religious ideals. The barn raisings of pioneer days were accomplished together. Even now, we often read stories of cooperative effort in planting or harvesting the crops for a neighbor in distress. Our consolidated schools are examples of cooperation. Farmers' cooperatives were never so extensive and useful as at present.

Uniting Force

Redemption is one of our common concerns. In fact, the redemption of American life, rural and urban, individual and social, is our supreme concern which we hold in common. It cannot be achieved apart from the cooperation and union of the churches.

Jesus prayed for the unity of his followers, as John puts it, "in order that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." This puts redemption and unity together where they belong.

We must cooperate or unite in order to accomplish the work of redemption in our rural communities. Separate churches acting separately are not and cannot be adequate channels of redemption. Long experience shows this with painful clarity.

Essential for Results

People will respond to cooperative efforts. The new strength and power, the reversal of downward membership trends, and the enthusiasm found in many united churches testify eloquently that people will respond.

Young people will respond where given the opportunity. Yet in most communities young people who are together day after day in school and sports are divided by the churches. Is it any wonder that in overwhelming numbers they refuse church participation and "honor" the church by their absence? And having thus refused, is it any wonder that, when they are adults, they are still alienated?

We are too glib in applying the term "community" to our areas. Many are not true communities at all but merely unintegrated social areas with too few common values and mutual activities to be considered communities. Basically they are not communities because they lack a soul.

Many communities lack a soul because of religious divisiveness. There can be little of wholeness about community life unless the forces of reconciliation, cooperation, and love are overcoming the forces of division.

Now this is the task of religion. Religion ought to be the most unifying force in rural communities. Instead it is often the most divisive.

Character Development

Another of our common concerns is to produce people with strong Christian character and personality. They were never more needed. Honesty, sobriety, intelligence, hard work, responsibility, and dedication —to mention only a few attributes— surely have a premium put upon them in these times. I am convinced that any breakdown in the national character is largely traceable to our homes and local communities, including rural. We cannot side-step our responsibility.

It seems to me that we must have cooperative communities if we are to develop people with the character and personality and power in social

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* A more detailed copy of this speech will be published in an early issue of the *Christian Rural Fellowship Bulletin*, 156 5th Ave., New York.

relationships sufficient to create a more cooperative world. Their training begins in the community and the home. The church has a very important role to play in the matter. It can teach cooperation by example, or it can teach division. What happens to us in our communities is directly related to the peace of the world.

Ecumenicity

We must remove the walls between denominational groups if we are going to have "grass-roots ecumenicity." The Northeastern farmers have had many stone walls about their fields in the past, but for many years now they have been removing them and broadening their fields for the use of power machinery. And what have they been doing with the stones out of the old walls? They have gone into the foundations of our modern highways.

So, too, in our community religious work. As we break down the walls of division we may use the stones to build the highways of the Lord, leading to a better and brighter tomorrow.

There are a number of other steps which should be taken to help develop "grass-roots ecumenicity." One of the most strategic is to introduce into the theological seminaries courses which will instruct the future clergy in the different types of cooperation and union, and how to develop them in the community. Last year only eighteen seminaries offered such work, and many of those dealt only with ecumenicity at the levels outside the community.

Spiritual Power

There is a blessing which comes to the cooperative individual. There is an expansion of personality and ability. There is an enrichment of character and an increase of spiritual power. It is true in any realm of united human action.

It is our high function and privilege to lose ourselves in strengthening the forces of union. Thereby we shall find ourselves, for we shall be serving more effectively our God and his children.

Choosing the best out of the heritages of two denominations—materials and methods and leadership—is a feature of most federations. The united approach to the community, the re-thinking of the program which is necessitated by union, and the securing of more adequate pastoral leadership—all these lend strength to the new undertaking. Of most importance is the spiritual power which comes from spirit meeting with spirit when the process of uniting has been conducted in a brotherly manner.

Union comes by the processes of growth. Many things are involved in growth but the processes are always localized, rooted in time and place, and, in the case of spiritual concepts, rooted in human personalities and grounded in the eternal purposes and creative love of God.

Whatever our religious heritage, we hold many concerns together. We hold Christ in common. We can bring Christ into a healing relationship to many of these concerns only as we become one in spirit and action.

• The photographs in this issue are presented through the courtesy of *Clifto,* 311 East 23rd Street, New York 10, N. Y.—or Clifford L. Samuelson (see Board of Editors).

The Convocation Book Table

Evangelism

FROM THE COMMISSION REPORT

• The rural church is not meeting its challenge to carry the gospel of Christ in an effective way to the countryside, village and small town. Part of this is undoubtedly due to a lack of adequate organization and facilities with which to do the job. Thousands of villages in America have no church of any kind. Others have no resident minister. Still others have no adequate concern or organized procedure for effective evangelism.

The churches in rural areas are feeders for the entire church enterprise. This is not only true with regard to members but it is also true in terms of leadership. Since migration from rural to urban areas is taking place at an unprecedented rate, the task of regenerating becomes fraught with tremendous difficulties if left to the urban churches alone. The task becomes greatly simplified as the churches in rural areas effect conversion before the trek is begun.

The church that is at work in rural areas is not always the wholesome and positive force it should be to be effective in evangelism. Its members are often ignorant of the

Christian life. It is often minus an awareness of Christian ethics with regard to the conduct of its institutional affairs as well as the day-by-day living of its members. In addition, certain social conditions that obtain in rural areas have also proved to be an impediment. One of these is that of a stratification of society.

If there was ever a need for great preaching it is now. Sometimes whole communities must be redeemed before individual converts to the Christian faith have a chance of survival. Often whole families must be converted together if any member is to grow in Christian grace. Often whole neighborhoods must be weeded of hindering organizations and business enterprises before Christians can grow in the manner in which they should.

Churches of many denominational groups are finding great value in the visitation technique as a means of propagating the Christian life. Regardless of the difficulties of enlisting lay people in such an enterprise, we highly recommend it as a sound procedure, and suggest that the church undertake the educational process necessary to enlist the membership of the church for such purpose.

Some experimentation is currently being done to meet the specific problems found in town and country churches. Attempts are being made to strengthen the total program of the church at the same time evangelistic advances are being made. These embrace evangelistic preaching, visitation for the purpose of securing a decision for Christ, reformation of the church program along more realistic lines and the redemption of community life.

DALE W. MEDEARIS, *Chairman*

The 1953 Convocation

• The 1953 National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country will be held at St. Paul, Minnesota, October 27-29. From time to time announcements will be made in this journal concerning the plans and the program.

The Church in the Rural-Urban Fringe

SAMUEL W. BLIZZARD, JR.

• The Rural-Urban Fringe is a social frontier located in the vicinity of American cities which a decade or two back was open countryside. Areas in the open country that were used for farming purposes are being turned into residential developments. Farmers find themselves plowing fields that are increasingly being invaded by the sidewalk and other symbols of urban life. This has changed the process of life radically in these rural areas and has altered the social structure.

One Foot on the Land

The rural-urban fringe, as distinguished from the suburban town, is largely a product of the automobile age. The speed and infinite flexibility of automotive transportation, coupled with increasing population and congestion in the city, made the rural commuter's residence possible and desirable in many respects. The search for freedom from noise and dirt, high taxes and crowding, and often a desire for a feeling of security in having "one foot on the land" is leading many to establish residences outside the city limits, where they feel these advantages are to be obtained.

Many sociologists see this as the infringement of urban life upon rural life. They think of it as perhaps the most important aspect of social change that has taken place in recent years. The growing rurbanism of our country has been testing the accommodative ability of rural and urban value systems. As people settle in the fringe they assimilate into their pattern of living those values from the rural or urban areas that help them move toward their new goals of living.

Problem Area

There are many problems which thousands of human beings create as they get established in a new area. Most difficulties in the fringe arise from the attempt to carry out a distinctively new social life without the benefit of regulated controls and facilities. The daily trek of people from the suburb to the city means

Commission on the Rural-Urban Fringe

that transportation facilities are overtaxed. Suburbanites are using streets and public transportation facilities without paying taxes.

Country stores are overwhelmed by new customers. Theatres, hospitals, post offices and libraries that formerly served small, trade-centered rural communities are overflowing with patrons. Schools are bulging with new students. Housing becomes scarce even though building may be going on at a fantastic rate.

Problems of social control in the fringe area create special opportunities for the church because the fringe is often a no-man's-land politically. County and township governments often do not have adequate police protection to keep order.

People who move to the fringe come from two directions, from the country and from the city. This is one factor that tends to make it difficult to develop a community spirit among the people.

Social Characterization

The fringe is an area of "normal" families. They are more likely to have a male head and consist of husband, wife, and child (or children) than do metropolitan households. The heads of households in the rurban zone are younger than those in other residential areas. Fringe dwellers tend to be home owners.

Among the commuter families there is a tendency toward supplemental income from part-time farming when the total income of the head of the family is below $3,000. The highest proportion of the commuter families are engaged in manufacturing occupations, while the highest proportion of the workers in noncommuter families are engaged in agriculture.

Building the Community

In order to establish a religious program in the fringe, we need to understand the techniques for building (or re-building) a community. Churchmen have generally shunned any social situation that seems to possess potential conflict. Religious leaders who wish to establish programs adapted to the needs of fringe residents will need to know how to use conflict constructively and to be willing to take part in it to the extent that it is an effective means toward the achievement of a desirable community goal.

One of the hasty and easy conclusions that religious workers arrive at concerning the fringe is that there are no community leaders. If they mean that there are no formally recognized leaders that may be justified in this observation. However, any group that is thrown together will begin to evolve its own social organization and an informal leadership structure will gradually be established. The clergymen who are seeking to meet the religious needs of the people living in the fringe will be successful to the extent that they tie in with this seemingly unorganized and informal leadership structure.

Religious Program

Generally speaking, churches reflect the social desirability of their community. If this is true, then churchmen need to direct their programs of religious activity and pastoral ministries toward the goal of adapting themselves to the specific needs of their respective environments. A church in the fringe should attempt to make itself locally essential and indigenous. It should grow out of what the Christian religion means collectively to the particular set of people who live in that environment. The program of a fringe church should have more of the character of a religious community helping itself to be a better community.

Although the churches remain an important center of religious and social life in the fringe, there is evidence that conservativeness has limited their effectiveness. The attempt of new ministers to encourage recreation for young people often meets with disfavor. Those who were opposed to these innovations are also said to be those who prefer the more traditional theology; and who, because of their position of dominance, can enforce their decisions.

The church in the fringe area should rediscover the value of and the techniques for developing the primary group, the small, intimate, face-to-face group. It would appear that this would offer churchmen a unique opportunity to evolve a new sense of Christian fellowship.

Religious Education

FROM THE COMMISSION REPORT

• Many related problems were discussed by the Commission on Religious Education, the first being the inadequacy of available materials to meet the needs of town and country churches. Recognizing that editors cannot write for every situation, it was felt that professional workers should interpret the printed materials to teachers in the local church, keeping in mind the people who are to be taught. The interpretation must be in terms which are meaningful in everyday experiences.

Coming directly out of the discussion of curriculum came the ever-present challenge of selecting, inspiring and training those who are to be the local leaders in Christian education. In organizing training institutes, techniques and methods must not be forgotten, but there should also be an awareness of the leader's or potential leader's need to grow spiritually. It is our task to know our people personally. Personal guidance and on-the-job training is vitally important.

Workers in Christian education should refrain from forming an idea about a person before getting acquainted with him. Much valuable leadership is lost by failure to know our church members.

The problem of shifting population in relatively unstable communities makes a Christian education program difficult. It was felt that the minister could help solve this problem by being aware of what is being taught, to whom and how.

It was the consensus of the group that the primary unit for Christian education is still the family. The church must help parents to both live and teach the Christian faith.

LUKE BEAUCHAMP, *Chairman*
MARGARET KENTFIELD, *Secretary*

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The Town and Country Church and This Convocation

CLAUDE J. SNYDER

• Nine years ago a Convocation was held in Columbus. It was planned because there were courageous and prophetic spirits who believed that the challenge of opportunities and the oft-time difficult situations of town and country churches were concerns of many denominations and also other agencies concerned in rural life. That first Convocation was fairly successful in the matter of attendance; and the years have shown that fires were lighted which have shown us the way ahead.

The annual Convocation has had sessions across the land. We have met in Columbus in 1943; in Elgin, Illinois, 1944; Des Moines, Iowa, 1946; Rochester, New York, 1947; San Jose, California, 1948; Lincoln, Nebraska, 1949; Columbia, Missouri, 1950; Portland, Oregon, 1951; and again in Columbus this year.

Changes

We have felt the heartening concern of farmers, educators, members of farm organizations, publishers of magazines and many other leaders. As these varied persons have appeared before this church-sponsored, voluntary agency, we have been repeatedly thrilled by their dedication to a vital and constructive rural life everywhere in our nation.

The church in the open country and in towns has lagged in awareness of amazing change. True, its people and its leaders could not shut their eyes to automobiles around the church, the closing of the district schools, the smaller families in the community, the greatly changed farm machinery. Yet far too often it goes on in mistaken assurance that the loyalty of bygone years will continue even though there has been modernization of everything else except the program of the church. Its offer of salvation must be directed toward the sins of today's people and the communities of today. It must offer opportunities for cultural, emotional, and ethical growth which will capture the interest and loyalty of its community. It must give guidance which will more adequately equip its people for life today.

The rural church must cherish the past; but her program must be directed to today's situation while her leadership is already planning for tomorrow's opportunities.

Sense of Community

When we consider some contributory reasons for the church's laggard response and adaptation to the new day, we may possibly find several in the wrong concepts of community. Four erroneous definitions of community are met rather frequently.

(1) A quite mistaken idea is that any group of people who share a single, perhaps even passing interest, is therefore a community. The local church which serves a community but makes no effort to discover the cohesions and the repulsions within the area cannot serve its situation adequately.

(2) People who may reside in a limited geographical area are not thereby a community. There can be no such relationship unless there are consciously chosen continuing interests in which they cooperate. It is this acting together which enriches the growth of a sense of community. Hundreds of new housing developments are mistakenly referred to as communities. A crowd violently yelling at a basketball game is not thereby a community.

(3) With the population growth of the smaller cities and county-seat towns there nearly always occurs an increase in the number of industrial, educational, social, cultural services. This expansion of available opportunities for spending money and time and greater selection range for all of these is interpreted as the marks of a more significant and satisfying community.

(4) Because we see countless new housing developments being built

all over the land, we are insistently made aware that there have been almost unbelievable population shifts. The change from established residence in one locality to another means the pulling up of old ties without the quick culture of new ones.

Even though these folks may have been genuine participants in their former community, they do not gain quickly a feeling of community in their new locality. Relationships do not grow simply because two people ride on the same bus regularly, or buy meat from the same butcher. It is not easy to get transplanted in a new community—flowers respond to that process more readily than human beings.

These days we shall spend here will be made profitable in learning to know a larger number of our fellow-workers. They will be engaged in varied tasks in relation to rural America, but they will be motivated by a common concern for the people and the institutions of town and country.

History of the Ohio Council of Churches

• One of the features on the general program of the Convocation was a pictorial review of the country life movement in Ohio, from the time of President Theodore Roosevelt until 1952, and of the contribution of the rural churches and their leaders to the total program. The director was Bruce Tom, Extension Sociologist of Ohio State University. The narrators were Kathryn Thompson Goode, a daughter of the Rev. W. H. Thompson, and the Rev. Joe Hendrix, pastor of an Evangelical United Brethren church in Fletcher, Ohio.

In the first episode, we had "Voices of Concern." Walter Bluck played the part of Theodore Roosevelt and Svend Peterson the part of Liberty Hyde Bailey, who was the chairman of the Commission on Country Life who reported to President Roosevelt in 1909. This period emphasized "Finding Facts."

Episode 2 was entitled, "The Mess We Are In," but it was not Washington in 1952, rather Ohio from 1912 to 1920. In the scene a surveyor interviewed a farmer. The actors were Cecil Leek and Roy Phillipi.

Next came a "Patriarch and Saint." The chief character was Dr. W. H. Thompson who served for many years in the Ohio Council of Churches. His part was taken by Alva Knoll.

Then came the period of action and growth. Among those appearing were the Rev. Joseph Varner and the Rev. Russell Hoy, the latter a minister who operates a small productive homestead.

Next we saw and heard Mrs. Clyde N. Rogers answering the telephone. Seems that many churches and communities still want speakers, and Mrs. Rogers knows whom to recommend.

Finally, representatives of the Soil Conservation Service, Agricultural Extension, Farmers Home Administration, Farm Bureau, Grange, Vocational Agriculture and Vocational Home Economics discussed how their own program emphasized the sacredness of life. The Rev. Clayton Pepper, in the epilogue, referred to the vision of the leaders of the present with respect to the future program in the state.

Rural Life Sunday

• Rural Life Sunday, the fifth after Easter, or Rogation Sunday, will be held on May 10th this year.

The Department of the Town and Country Church has published an Order of Service for use by a congregation. It has been prepared for the Department by the Rev. C. R. McBride, Central Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Kans.

Copies may be obtained from your cooperating home mission board or from the Department of Publication and Distribution, National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., 120 East 23rd Street, New York 10, N. Y., at the following rates: Single copies, 5 cents each; 100 copies or more, $2.60 for each 100 copies. Carriage extra on quantity orders.

World Food Needs

FROM THE COMMISSION REPORT

• The battle for food is being los due to population increases througl out the world, lack of proper di tribution of food, higher standard of living, failure to apply what w know technologically, and dowr right lack of concern.

The battle need not be lost. Ther are enough natural resources to pr vide the food. There is technica "know-how" to increase productior There are facilities not only to di tribute surpluses but to show th people in critical areas how to hel themselves.

The Commission on World Foo Needs of this Convocation recog nizes that most of the world's prol lems are rural and should be solve by people with skill and understanc ing of rural life. Concern for thi problem is evidenced by the Foo and Agriculture Organization of th United Nations, by the Marshal and Point Four Plans, by churc agencies and missions, and by othe agencies such as CROP, CARI Heifers for Relief, etc. The member of the commission believe that gov ernmental programs should be d vorced from military programs an become non-political, non-partisar non-military extension service. W believe, also, that church relief an rehabilitation services should b made an integral part of the church missionary program.

The commission recommends tha church-sponsored relief and rehabil tation programs should become c more vital concern and receiv proper cultivation and support as a integral part of the approved mi sionary programs.

Several leaders in this field pr sented their experience at the se sions of the commission. All of thes speakers expressed a belief that rur people should be better informe about world needs and the progran of service that are being conducte The commission suggests that di semination of literature be dor through theological students in sen inaries and leaders in rural areas.

MARK RICH, *Chairman*
MRS. EDWARD D. HAMNER, *Secreta*

The Ministry of Food

MURRAY D. LINCOLN

Today our world is on fire. It has burst into flame from the spontaneous combustion caused by the world's poverty. Three-quarters of the people in our world today live in ignorance, poverty, disease, and hunger.

Over a billion people live in the underdeveloped areas of the world. With few exceptions they subsist on diets twenty per cent below the minimum necessary for health and efficiency. Their average life span is less than one-half that in the United States.

In their countries, there are hardly any hospitals, few doctors, few schools, no plumbing and practically no comforts—but always stark, gnawing hunger. The process of living for these people is only a process of trying to stay alive until tomorrow.

Misery

Hunger is at the root of all the political stagnation and economic frustration in the underdeveloped countries. It is this hunger which breeds revolutions and wars—and leads its victims to embrace communism.

In the underdeveloped and most heavily populated areas of the world where the mass of the world's people live, per capita food consumption levels are still far below the already inadequate pre-war averages. This, of course, is most acute in Southeast Asia. The diet of the peoples there has become even more unbalanced as shown by the decrease in consumption of animal foods.

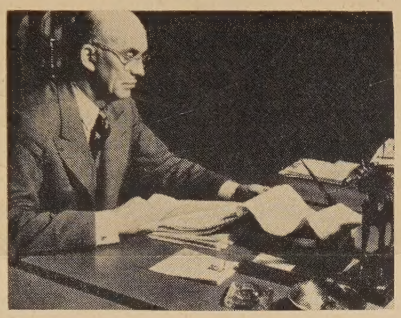
Our Task

We face a task of vast dimensions—a job that will test all of our resources—material and spiritual—to the utmost. It will call upon all our ingenuity, all our capacity for organization, all our ability to understand our fellowman. It will need the full effort and support of each segment of our economy: Government—industry—labor—agriculture—and peoples' organizations. Government can provide the framework through its policies both foreign and domestic—for a world of plenty. But it cannot itself achieve our final goal.

Effective Program

There is a great need for industrial statesmanship in such a program. The kind of statesmanship which would stress cooperation—not competition.

Too, a fundamental reorganization of our national economic system and an equalization of our standards of living will be needed.



Murray D. Lincoln

We must begin by firmly setting the consumer, not the producer, in the center of our economic system. And by making planned consumption—not planned production—the starting point.

This means the introduction of a minimum standard for all in all the essentials of life. This means that our economic system must revolve around the standard of what is socially desirable for the consumer, not what brings most profit to the producer.

People must participate. You and I know that the answer to all our common problems lies within the people themselves. We know that we do not progress unless we enlist and increase the understanding and participation of everyone who is affected. That is one of the principles of brotherhood—and the essence of democratic action.

Today we're emerging from a producer economy to a consumer economy. We now know how to produce everything that every one of us needs or wants—but we haven't whipped the bugaboo of distribution. We've got to solve this problem of the piling up of surpluses. We've got to get more goods to more people all over the world—and especially and first to the great underdeveloped, hungry, ill-housed, illiterate, diseased areas of the good earth.

Plowshares Over Swords

As I see it, there are six major ways in which all of us working here with each other can help to achieve a world of plenty. And only by achieving that world of plenty can we overcome fear and build a permanent peace.

Each of you, working with the people of your church and community, can do these things:

First—We should support a strengthened United Nations. That would also mean a permanent United Nations police force. Such a police force would have powers broad enough to implement decisions of the United Nations and to preserve the peace.

Second—We should enthusiastically support any foreign policies and programs which help the underdeveloped nations achieve material and social and economic equality with their fellowmen. I'm thinking especially of an expanded Point Four program.

Third—We should continue to support international self-help relief activities for aid abroad through such organizations as CROP and CARE.

Fourth—We must mobilize our people further in helping your churches to send more missionaries who also are doctors, farm specialists, and educators.

Fifth—We should strengthen all our voluntary groups of people—like cooperatives—so that they will have an even greater role in not only our national, but our international, economy.

Sixth—We should vigorously support any movements—by government, industry, labor, agriculture,

or voluntary organizations—which will achieve for the people of the underdeveloped countries these things which they want and need so badly:

a. Adequate medical care.
b. Schools for themselves and their children.
c. Ownership of their own land.
d. The right to vote in free, secret elections.
e. The right to develop their own natural resources with outside help but without foreign domination.

If mankind is to be saved it can only be done by replacing materialistic values with those of humanity —with those of cooperation, fellowship, and brotherhood.

Renewed Faith

Yes—to bring the fellowship and brotherhood of man into being we are going to have to sublimate competition to cooperation. And in all we do, our actions must express our belief in a renewed faith.

Our renewed faith must speak in positive rather than negative terms, striving for the achievement of good rather than for the avoidance or suppression of evil.

Our renewed faith must reaffirm our rich heritage of moral and political principles which we have always conceived as applying equally to all people of the world. That every man should be free to think for himself, to worship his God in his own way, to express his convictions, and to act, either alone, or with others, in accordance with what he believes to be the highest good.

Our renewed faith must make its appeal to our belief that everyone in the world has a right to a sufficient quantity of material goods to enable him to live in a way that is consistent with his dignity as a human being.

Our renewed faith will approach the unemployment problem, not by way of prevention—but by way of the creation of needs vast enough to make a full call on our resources and morally imperative enough to command the necessary measure of sacrifice to supply them.

Our renewed faith will have to revive the ideal of equality which, however imperfectly realized, lies at the root both of Christianity and communism, and which has been deliberately rejected by much of the capitalistic system. The first step is to secure the full distribution to all people, everywhere, of what we call the necessities of life.

Our renewed faith must lay more stress on obligations rather than rights—on services to be rendered to the community rather than on the benefits to be drawn from it.

Unless we are willing to sacrifice for others because our goals are morally right, we will have neither peace nor security nor freedom.

Worship

FROM THE COMMISSION REPORT

• Some of the problems considered by the commission in a discussion of "The Meaning of Worship" were the sense of wonder, the sense of need, adoration and reverence, thanksgiving, confession and dedication.

Worship was defined as "the conscious response of the human spirit to the revelation of the love and greatness and goodness of God." It was emphasized that Christian worship differs from other kinds of worship in what it recognizes as supreme; in that it is based on truth; in what Christians celebrate; and in the fruits which it bears, such as brotherhood and fellowship.

Private and corporate worship were given their proper status. The question, "are there values in group worship not to be gained elsewhere?" was answered in the affirmative. Some of the values were felt to be that corporate worship enhances and strengthens the feeling of fellowship, community and brotherhood; that it increases receptivity because there are others doing the same thing; and it brings a greater awareness of the reality of God.

The problem of relating worship to the total life was discussed, the chairman pointing out that unless our worship makes a difference in the way we face life it is not effe tive. In response to the query, "Ho can we make sure that experience of worship are related to life?" th members of the commission consid ered opportunities for expression i smaller groups, the necessity for th leader to know his people and thei problems, and the necessity of pu ting real thought into the worshi service to make it vital.

The final session of the commi sion studied the problem of churc music. Mr. Clyde Holt of the Wes minster Choir College, Princeto N. J., suggested the following mat rials for those interested in mor meaningful church music:

1. Benson's "Studies in Familia Hymns"
2. H. Augustine Smith's "Lyri Religion"
3. McCutcheon's "Our Hyn nody"
4. Handbook to Presbyteria Hymnal
5. Handbook to Evangelical an Reformed Hymnal
6. Bailey's "Gospel and Hymns
7. Wilson's "Lead a Song" (choi
8. Kettering's "The Singin Church"
9. Whittlesby's "Youth and Chi dren's Choirs"

It was emphasized that the rur church people can and will appr ciate a well-planned formal order service, liturgical or non-liturgica if church life is truly a redemptiv fellowship. The question is n whether worship shall be formal informal but whether it brings pe ple into the presence of God an makes him real. Education alon this line is needed.

Concerning congregational pa ticipation in worship services, th chairman pointed out that it ma be encouraged and cultivated b having printed orders of service, r sponsive readings, more short pra ers, litanies, etc. Evangelism, wo ship and the redemptive fellowshi in the church are closely related an mutually helpful.

EDWARD K. ZIEGLER, *Chairma*
CALVIN T. WEIMER, *Secreta*

The Church and Cooperation with Community Agencies

FROM THE COMMISSION REPORT

• Many types of interchurch association and cooperation with other agencies were discussed during the sessions of the commission. It was felt that the success or failure of any form of union or cooperation depends largely upon the ministerial leadership. As a rule, it is best to attempt short-term projects at first upon which there can be general agreement and a reasonable expectation of success. The longer-term projects that can be completed in a series of steps can come later.

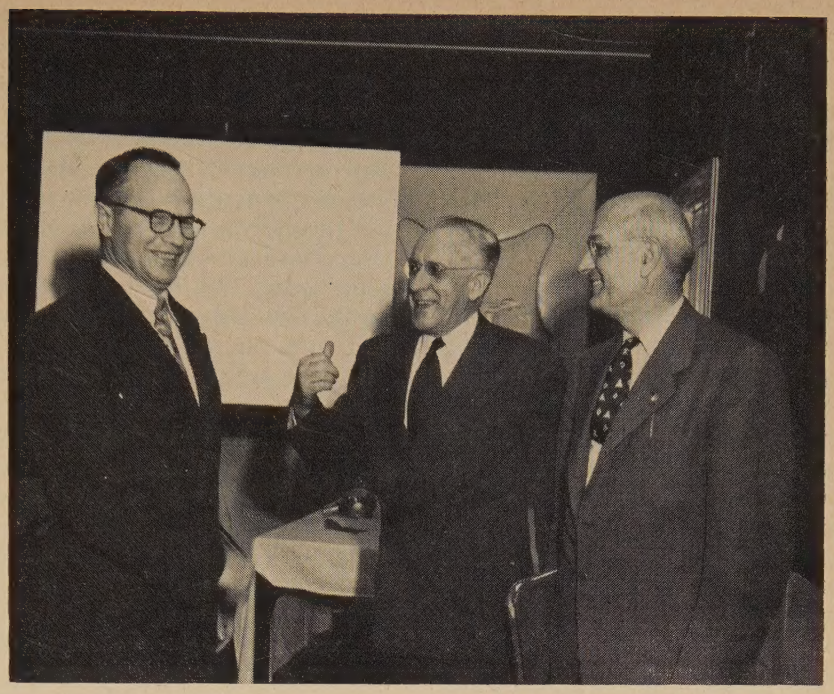
Many varieties of church federation are possible. Some places keep separate memberships, separate officials, separate treasuries, etc. Generally, only the membership rolls and benevolence funds are kept separate.

Regarding the union or non-denominational community church, there is a serious problem of securing ministers, literature and developing benevolence programs. The development of union of administration on mission fields helps such churches to find an outlet for mission funds.

In some communities church people are reluctant to have any association with other organizations, either because their standards and activities are different or because of competition for time and interest. A greater mutual appreciation between church and agencies needs to be developed. Examples were given of Farm and Home Week where agricultural, economic and religious topics are presented, and of the short courses on rural work at Oberlin College and other institutions where both laymen and ministers are welcomed and where representatives of various other agencies present their programs. Programs developed in one organization benefit the others, and a greater appreciation results.

Accomplishments are measured in terms of good relationships between churches, and between churches and other agencies.

CLYDE N. ROGERS, *Chairman*



From left to right: Don F. Pielstick; I. George Nace; Benson Y. Landis

All in One Countryman's Lifetime

CHARLES M. McCONNELL

• My life has been essentially that of a countryman. During these six and more decades I have been a part of the country life movement; for the most part, a part of the problem and working at its solution. It is my purpose to mention some of the major changes I have been a part of in country life during these years.

Natural Resources

How to stay alive on this planet with the resources it affords and not waste and destroy them is one of the age-long and always critical problems of humanity. While nature is a part of the daily life of farmers, it also concerns every living being on this earth.

I was born early enough to witness the wanton destruction of virgin timber, ruthless exploitation of natural resources, and erosion due to abuse of land. I have seen this become rated as a major sin against God and man.

I have sat in great convocations and listened to the leaders of soil conservation lay down the laws of nature and plead with preachers and church leaders to stop sinning against the soil, or at least to discover when and where men sin against soil and all of God's natural resources.

The other day in Lisbon, North Dakota, a soil conservationist was given an American Revised Version of the Bible for his efforts in soil improvement and conservation. I regard him as one of the earth's leading Christians, but sixty years ago, had he attempted this, he would have been called secular and worldly.

Rural Community

The rural community has always been man's chief dwelling place. It still is, for three-quarters of the human race live either in the open country or in villages and towns close to the great natural processes. It is only within the last half century that the importance of these small communities has been recognized by the total human race. We are still young in this area of our civilization and have only sketched out the broad outlines of the process

by which we can redeem and Christianize, or even civilize or humanize, the vast forces which play upon mankind from his environment.

At least we have let loose in those communities the ideas that man is a social being and that he is saved largely in relationship to his fellowman.

"Town-Country" Community

We have about taken the word "and" out of the expression "Town and Country" and re-phrased it "Town-Country" community. The relationship of the open country to the town and the town to the open country has changed from hostility and competition to recognition of mutual interest and the necessity for cooperation.

America is the greatest agricultural community in the world. More people live on the land in farmhouses in the United States of America than in any nation on the globe. Other great civilizations have developed under the pattern of the village as man's dwelling place. From the village to the farmed acres an endless procession has gone forth in the morning and returned to the village home at night.

We have settled man on the land and, with his feet on the earth and his home within walking distance from the barnyard and the cultivated fields, he has lived his life. Around certain railroad centres and shipping points, or in some secluded valley, others have built villages and towns and lived their lives serving the agricultural people around them. Their interests have always been mutual and essentially the same. Now a new relationship of friendliness and cooperation is arising in what we choose to call the "Town-Country" community.

The Country Church

The country church is finding itself by losing its life in service. Along about 1908, when Theodore Roosevelt appointed a Country Life Commission, the church had its sad plight revealed as purely a soul-saving institution. Caught up in this new interest in rural life, the church has steadily broadened its service, ministered in new ways to community life, and at its best today stands as the most powerful interest in American rural life. It has lost heavily in the mining areas, timber lands, among sharecroppers, and in migrant groups, but it has lost in these areas because the people themselves were not localized in communities or integrated into community life. We have at last found answers to many rural community and rural church problems.

I have seen a new race of rural preachers emerge out of schools and universities and theological seminaries. Rural preachers, trained in reference to the rural social situation, and specialized and equipped for their tasks, have set the pattern which we must follow. I say this, knowing full well that many of them are unknown, have no status, and are despised and rejected by the urban and over-ambitious small-town areas of America.

For over one-half of the sixty years I am considering I have given my time to the recruiting and training of rural ministers. I know they are working along modern, aggressive, community-building lines.

World Situation

The sixty years I have considered have witnessed three major conflicts, the Spanish-American War, World Wars I and II. How we take care of the soil in America and build Christian rural communities, ministered to by a church that saves not only the souls but the environment in which they live, will determine more than anything else America's destiny, if not mightily influence the world life. When we deal with rural life we are dealing with enduring forces which will last through the foreseeable future.

Christian Faith

A few weeks ago I made some journeys in the back-road areas of New England with a great evangelist, E. Stanley Jones. He was taking the gospel in its ageless and spaceless aspects to the rural areas of that section. He told these New England farmers and villagers that he had met all the great religions of the world face on and had heard the best arguments of their leaders presented. He said not one of them in theory or in practice could match the simple gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is with this assurance and confidence that the church at its best proclaims and practices in rural areas a gospel which sprang from the hills and valleys and lakesides of Judea. I know of no force capable of matching the fanatical zeal of atheists, communists or secularists save the Christian gospel, preached and lived.

The Church Building

FROM THE COMMISSION REPORT

• Many problems involved in building a new church or remodelling an old one were discussed at the sessions of the commission. Inasmuch as there is a great deal of diversified opinion regarding design, the members of the commission felt that it is advisable to take about a year to study the location and needs before building a new church. Space, available finances and program may indicate the most appropriate design. It is often advisable to build by units, but it is a grave error not to have the whole architectural plan in hand before the first unit is built.

The services of a contractor and a supervisor architect who does the buying on a profit-sharing method is a good way to save money when building a new church. Adequate counsel and advice is also good economy. Contributed labor must be skillfully used to be profitable.

A building item in the regular budget of the church is excellent for a starting fund. In any event, part of the money involved should be available before the work is started, and part of it should be on short-term pledges, in order to reduce the debt. The final payments may be met in part by contributions from community organizations, or by church money-raising projects.

The rural church often needs a "versatile" chancel with an altar which can be moved to provide space for educational programs, such as visual aid.

FORREST GROFF, *Chairman*
VOLNEY D. LOFGREEN, *Secretary*

Lay Participation

FROM THE COMMISSION REPORT

• Lay participation in the life of the church is essential to its success. Through participation in church activities families have a feeling of belonging to the church and the church belonging to them in an abiding sense of security.

Lay participation must not become stereotyped or burdensome. The constitution itself should provide for automatic rotation of leadership.

It is the lay membership of the church which interprets the role of the church in the community to those who are outside the church. This interpretation takes place not only when lay people participate in visitation evangelism projects or in stewardship campaigns, but also in the day by day contacts which members of the same community have with one another. Effective interpretation of this kind will make it easier to secure financial support.

Among the obstacles to lay leadership in the church, the members of the commission cited the following: Dominance of patriarchal rule; untrained leadership for group activities; mobility of families. These could be partly overcome by adequate training programs.

J. P. SCHMIDT, *Chairman*

Radio

FROM THE COMMISSION REPORT

• The first session of the commission opened with a brief statement by the leader concerning religious broadcasting in the United States. *Broadcasting Religion,* compiled by Clayton T. Griswold and Charles H. Schmitz, and published by the Broadcasting and Film Commission of the National Council of Churches, was recommended as a valuable source book. The book was used extensively in the early part of the sessions and referred to throughout the discussions.

Business uses radio to sell merchandise, to introduce new products, to sell ideas and to build good will. Protestantism uses religious broadcasting for several reasons. It should be used to present the Christian gospel in its fulness and to provide a balanced presentation of the major functions of church life in evangelism, teaching, service and world missions.

Religious radio by and for youth was discussed. It was agreed that more emphasis needed to be placed here.

The leader made two recommendations for religious producers. First, they must use the best salesmanship; and, secondly, they must employ the best showmanship.

Sunday night was recommended as a good time for good religious programs.

Despite the growing awareness of radio for religious programs, there seems to be a lack of practical training in this field. The work shops are helpful, and the university courses are helping to meet this need.

ROBERT GEIS, *Chairman*
CARROLL N. ODELL, *Secretary*

Television

FROM THE COMMISSION REPORT

• Discussions at the sessions of this commission brought out a number of facts and indicated that, although there are only 108 TV stations today, there will be between 700 and 1,400 stations within five years and, within that time, the TV coverage of the nation will be as complete as is now the case with AM radio. This means that most small cities with a population of, say 20,000, will have a local TV station operating by 1957.

TV, even today, represents an opportunity for public service and public interest groups, and this opportunity will grow with the development of the new station. Stations will cooperate and gladly give time to religious groups who are prepared to use it. They are not, however, prepared to provide the man-power to prepare scripts.

In no area does the problem of cooperation on all levels of the church's life become more pressing than in this new area, and the commission members make these recommendations:

1. That local ministerial associations and councils of churches activate, as soon as possible, a representative Radio and TV Committee which will attempt to think in terms of the new medium and possibly send one or more members to radio-TV workshops.

2. That state councils of churches employ a specialist in radio and TV whose responsibility will be to establish relationships with TV stations throughout the state and to provide technical assistance to local religious groups interested in local shows.

3. That the National Council of Churches' Broadcasting and Film Commission, in cooperation with its Division of Religious Education, begin to make productions that may be used by local TV stations.

4. That the Broadcasting and Film Commission of the National Council of Churches begin to establish a library of suitable films that may be rented at nominal charges by local stations and religious groups.

FRANCIS C. BYRNES, *Chairman*
ROY LEMOINE, *Secretary*

Purposes of This Journal

The purposes of this Journal are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church, finance, religious education, community relationships, and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

Part of Larger Program

The Journal is an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program" that will encourage a national "rural church movement."

Interdenominational County Rural Life Institutes in Virginia

C. RALPH ARTHUR

• The Extension Service of the Department of Agriculture and the Virginia Council of Churches have developed a technique which is proving to be a valuable asset in our rural life program. This technique is the Interdenominational County Rural Life Institute. After experience in more than one hundred of these institutes we can report that they have been a vital force which has given objective, motivation and impetus to programs of improvement in rural life conditions and to the development of better communities.

Development of Rapport

The institutes bring together ministers, professional leaders of the public service agencies, and leaders of community organizations for discussion of the problems and opportunities confronting them in their work. These professional people usually conclude their discussions with the conviction that the development of human and community improvement programs is the joint responsibility of the church and the agencies concerned. Often definite plans for united action are made at the meeting.

The institutes have been valuable as an aid to the development of rapport between county leaders and an understanding of the work each is doing. A closer integration of the work of the church, the public service agencies, and the community organizations is a result of this fellowship and understanding.

The Interdenominational County Rural Life Institutes have been jointly sponsored from the beginning by the Extension Service and the Rural Church Department of the Virginia Council of Churches. Dr. B. L. Hummel, the Extension rural sociologist and chairman of the Rural Church Department, has been the key person behind the origination and development of the institutes. The present degree of effectiveness attributed to these meetings must be credited to his interest, personality, and experience.

Planning

The county institutes are jointly planned by county extension agents, ministers of different denominations, and representatives of other community groups with the assistance of the Extension sociologist. The invitation, when it is given, comes from all of the participating groups. This is significant. The meetings are more effective because they are not imposed. Rather they come out of an awareness of the need shared by all who participate. However, the initiative may come from any one of the groups.

The actual planning for an institute is done by the County Committee made up of representatives appointed by each participating organization. The Committee has a threefold function. First, the Committee discusses the precise nature and purpose of the meeting with the Extension sociologist and his staff. This purpose varies from county to county, depending on the peculiar situation in the county and the degree of cooperation which already exists among the participants. The program is planned with specific objectives in mind.

The second function of the Committee is to plan the time and the place of the meeting. Arrangements for lunch invitations and publicity are also made by the Committee.

Program planning is the third function of the Committee. This involves selecting presiding officers, speakers, topics, and discussion leaders. The effectiveness of the institute is largely determined by the work of this County Planning Committee.

Program

The meetings in Virginia have been day meetings. The standard schedule is from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 noon, and from 1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. This schedule is divided into two periods. The morning period is devoted to the work of the public service agencies and community organizations. The speakers are usually professional workers in the county who can tell of the programs of their agencies as they are oriented to the county. Specific reference is made to ways through which the churches can implement the programs and improve the services rendered by the agencies. Experience directs that it is better to present the work of a few agencies in detail rather than brief outlines of the work of many.

The afternoon period is given to a discussion of the work of the rural church as it relates to rural life in the county. Controversial subjects are avoided. The speakers are selected from the county ministers as a rule. However, denominational leaders are sometimes used if the purpose of the meeting is to deal with methods and ideas on which they can give the latest information.

Evaluation

The results of the institutes are the only true measure of their effectiveness. The benefits have been many. First, the ministers have profited from their participation and have received new insights concerning the effects of the economic, social, and cultural environment upon rural life, rural people, and the rural church.

Second, the professional workers have found the institutes valuable. Although the great majority are very good church workers, many have gained from the institutes a new appreciation of the church and the religious values of their own work.

Third, the ministers and the professional workers meet in the institutes on a level of fellowship. This fellowship often leads to understanding and a spirit of camaraderie which enhances the spirit and work of all groups.

The Interdenominational County Rural Life Institutes have demonstrated to Virginia's ministers and professional workers that the church can be a channel for social redemption when she directs her power and

resources to that end. Working together, the church and these agencies can build the Kingdom of God in the countryside.

Recruiting for the Ministry

FROM THE COMMISSION REPORT

• Recruiting for the ministry of the rural church will be easier as we continue to make forward strides in improving salaries, in revamping poorly planned circuits into parishes in a given community, and in continuing to give status to rural pastors.

Most of the leaders of Israel were men who were dedicated to God's service before they were born. Why cannot boards of Christian education and missions cooperate with pastors in presenting the challenge to young people of guiding their sons and daughters into full-time Christian service? The importance of the job and the significance of the situation may be brought to the attention of young people through career conferences. These may be held ecumenically on the local level or denominationally on the conference or state level.

But the pastor is still the key person in witnessing to the job of his work and challenging others to pursue it. He can secure assistance by seeking the cooperation of school principals and guidance teachers. He can develop in his congregation a sense of pride in the sons and daughters who have gone into full-time Christian service, as well as in those who are preparing for this service.

To assist in the challenge of recruiting for the rural ministry, there should be more biographies and novels available, presenting in a positive way "the Protestant rural pastor."

This commission recommends the production of a film on the rural pastorate; the preparation of a list of books on the rural ministry; and the preparation of an illustrated pamphlet which could be used by all denominations.

ALFRED BARTHOLOMEW, *Chairman*
ROBERT M. TODD, *Secretary*

Financing the Town and Country Church

FROM THE COMMISSION REPORT

• Among the problems studied by the commission were the pastor's position in promoting financial programs; organization of the financial program and underwriting of the budget; the philosophy of the church farm; the Lord's Acre and related plans for raising money; financing the church in the rural-urban fringe area; how to get help from denominational leaders; the United Church Canvass; larger parish financing; stewardship cultivation.

It was felt that many people oppose the every-member canvass because the community is being over-canvassed for different projects and pledging is not the rural way of doing things. There is also fear on the part of some people that they will not be able to pay the amount pledged. A solution to the latter problem might be a statement printed on the pledge card to the effect that the pledge could be changed if reverses made it seem advisable. It was felt that stewardship training of children is of the utmost importance.

A financial campaign should be well publicized and a printed budget should be placed in the hands of each member of the church. On the date set for all canvassing to be completed, a Church Loyalty Sunday or Dedication Sunday should be observed when pledges are received. Letters should be written to the contributors, stating appreciation for their part in underwriting the budget.

It is well to announce the progress of the financial program at different times of the year.

Many churches find the Lord's Acre plan an effective means of raising funds for church expenses. Closely related to the Lord's Acre plan is the church farm idea. This plan has many advantages in that the cooperative work promotes Christian fellowship as well as provides money for local church support and missions. The church farm can also be an effective means of promoting better farm practices in the community.

GEORGE P. KERR, *Chairman*

Church and Community Study

FROM THE COMMISSION REPORT

• Five approaches that may be used in making a study of the church and community were considered by the members of the commission. These were: 1. The ecological approach, which takes into account the spatial pattern of the community and the relationship of the church to this pattern; 2. The socio-psychological approach, which looks at the quality of social relations and mental attitudes; 3. The time-series approach, which is concerned mainly with trends in community life; 4. The demographic approach, which is concerned primarily with population movements; 5. The functional approach, which considers what the church is going to do about these problems.

Certain techniques simplify and facilitate the making of a survey. One method is to have the members of the church take inventory of their neighborhoods. This can be done by organizing the entire membership into locality groups and having the various locality groups come to the church, one at a time, at two-hour intervals to fill out cards on the people of their localities. These cards should include such information as name, sex, address, age, occupation, church membership and other data on church relationships. An analysis of such data is useful to the church in the planning of its program of outreach to the community.

The reluctance of denominations to enter places too small to support a traditional church program with a resident pastor was discussed. Various adaptations which would bring a more adequate church program were considered. These included some form of a larger parish, the more effective use of lay leadership, and cooperative, interdenominational program-planning under experienced counsel.

HERBERT STOTTS, *Chairman*

The Rural Church of the Negro People in the South

HARRY V. RICHARDSON

• There are certain words that we pick up, adopt and wear out, such as "challenge," "crisis," "undergird," "grass roots," "relevant," or "impact." Since we have used the word "impact," nothing has an "effect" on anything any more. It has an "impact" on it. Impact of the church on society, or impact of social conditions on the church, means "striking together of two forces or objects, or the result of it." When we use this word we give a picture of the church and society trying to knock each other out.

This is exactly what has happened with the rural church of the Negro people in the South. Because it could not or would not counteract adverse social forces, the forces have come very close to knocking the rural church out.

Decline in Population

The rural church of the Negro people in the South is today a diminishing church if not a vanishing one, passing with the displaced masses who formerly were the "hands" in Southern agriculture. A church means people. When the people go, the church goes too.

Some of this decline in population is normal and necessary, and represents not a defeat for the church but rather an inevitable change in keeping with changing conditions. Many of the rapid technical changes are displacing Negro laborers who formerly made their living from the land. There have been changes in the rural South from the growing of cotton to the raising of cattle, diversified crops, and the setting out of pine trees. These are all good changes and they have vastly lifted the economic and social level of Southern life, but they are displacing thousands of low paid, partly-employed Negro "hands"—some refer to it as a second emancipation.

In Mississippi, the Negro population decreased eight per cent between 1940 and 1950, indicating a tremendous migration of Negroes out of that state. There is a movement from farm to city, in the South as elsewhere. The old-type Negro church has moved to town with the people who have gone to town.

Denominations are slow to admit the loss of a church and churches are slow to die. Some old folks always hold on, and as long as they can get a few pennies together you can always get someone to preach. Then, technically, you have a church.

The Progressive Church

But there can be no generalization in any statement about an area as large, as varied, and as complex as the South. It is a region of exceptions, paradoxes, contradictions. Some Negro churches are really country cathedrals, community shrines, fit expressions of worship of God. Some are led by able, learned, working pastors who try hard to make religion a lifting factor in the lives of their folk. Some Negro rural churches were founded with a view to permanence and move in the conviction that life in their communities can be stable, secure, friendly, progressive, Christian.

We all know Negro churches such as these but, if we really know them, we know that they are struggling churches, churches struggling bitterly against destructive economic and social forces that threaten to destroy it—knock it out; ward off the "impact."

Common Destinies

It is this church which is important to us and deserves our sincere consideration. The Negro church is an epitome of the whole. What happens to it can and will happen to all. The same distinctive forces that would destroy the wholesome Negro church would destroy any church, if permitted to run unchecked. Thus, in our rural religion, our interests are one because our destinies are also.

The good rural church among the Negroes struggles against the tendency toward precipitate flight that for several decades had dominated agricultural life among the Negroes. Although they ought to know better, many Negroes feel that to be caught on a farm in the South after dark is a fate worse than death. Why? Because there are destructive forces which hamper wholesome agricultural life, and hence the rural church.

Among these forces are the maladministration of justice or the injustice meted out to Negroes in county courts; lack of political participation, greater exposure to violence in rural sections; and, greatest of all, lack of good neighborliness in rural communities.

Church's Responsibility

What can we do about these things? As churchmen, we can keep clearly before us the values of the agricultural way of life for the Negro element of the American population. It is a tragedy to become a landless people.

We can sense and fight the wicked forces that destroy the Negro church, and hence—any church. We can help Negroes to gain representation on local and county agencies dealing with rural life. We can help them to buy land. We can encourage better and younger Negroes to come into community leadership. We can establish a closer unity between the Christians of a community—both as institutional churches and as Christian persons. This will let the Negro Christian feel his kinship, his oneness with the whole church. It will give him a sense of strength and security nothing else can.

A secure and progressive people will mean a greater church, a growing church. This is the aim of all who are concerned for rural religion.

How They Sang!

• The song services at the Convocation were ably conducted by the Rev. Joseph T. Jones, Presbyterian U.S.A., of Charlotte, N. C.

The Church in the Rural-Urban Fringe

FROM THE COMMISSION REPORT

• The rural-urban fringe is an area of revolving social life in the shadows of the city where rural communities traditionally centered in agriculture are being populated by urban workers seeking places of residence. These developments on the periphery of the cities attract people who want the advantages of rural living while engaging in work in the city. The traditional community life in these areas is disrupted.

The existing social organizations are overwhelmed by the numbers of these people whose diverse manners of social behavior contribute to an unorganized and amorphous social life. Consequently, there is low participation in the organizations of the community, few centers of interest are present within the area, and conflict often arises between the old-timers and the newer population.

Three types of fringe development may be distinguished which present to some extent different challenges to the program of the church. The first type is the area in which established small open-country churches are surrounded by the new population which may come in over a period of a few years. The second occurs where large housing projects are placed in the midst of an agricultural area near the city and where there are no churches.

In these instances the former community life is completely displaced and an entirely new community must be developed. The third type is the church in the village lying near the city whose population is being increased by the movement into it of city workers.

In order that the church may more adequately undertake its work of reaching the people in the rural-urban fringe and permeating their social life, we urge the following:

1. We would call upon this Convocation and the church in general to give greater attention to the understanding of the will of God for the life of man-in-community.

2. There should be continuous research in fringe areas that the timing in the placement of churches and of shifts in program may coincide with the periods of greatest opportunity.

3. We urge that the Departments of the Town and Country Church and the Urban Church of the National Council of Churches, and their counterparts in denominational agencies, establish a cooperative approach in their consideration of the needs and opportunities in this area. Furthermore, while we appreciate the problems of the inner-city church whose members move into the fringe we believe that the best interests of the people, the church, and the community are to be served by the integration of these people into the life of the church in their new communities.

4. Since the implementation of any program based on the findings of research rests with local groups, we recommend that the development of background information for a fuller understanding of any local fringe area be considered primarily the responsibility of local and state councils of churches or other local bodies in consultation with the research services available in the National Council and in the various denominations.

5. Where possible the church should initiate or cooperate with other agencies in over-all community planning.

6. The church should make every possible use of all sources of factual data such as city and regional planning agencies, state colleges, and community planning services.

7. We call on all churches to work constantly to develop a Christian concern among their members for all people in the communities and a willingness to bring new people into the organization and places of responsibility of the church.

8. We recommend that the Division of Home Missions of the National Council of Churches take steps to gather accounts of experiences which have advanced the lives of churches in the fringe areas and that wide publicity be given to these success stories.

SAMUEL W. BLIZZARD, *Chairman*
EDWIN L. BECKER
WESLEY HOTCHKISS
WALDO KIHLSTROM
R. ALVIN WILSON

Prayer for Rural-Urban Cooperation

• O thou who didst create all men and all things, send thy healing spirit to all who labor and are heavy laden, in field and factory, in office and in home. May those of country and city learn of their dependence upon thee and upon one another. Teach city man and country man to practice mutual helpfulness. Give thy light to every city home and assurance of thy presence to the last man on the last farm. May thy grace be shown to those who are lonely in spite of the crowded ways of life and to those who are friendless on forgotten farms. Grant to all of farm and industry the vision of thy justice and the power to surrender to thy holy will. Arouse the hearts of all men to mercy. Usher in the commonwealth where thy peace and goodness shall reign, where men shall truly serve thee and one another forevermore. *Amen.*

—BENSON Y. LANDIS, *Agricultural Missions Notes,* October, 1938.

Worship Services

• The worship services at the Columbus Convocation were conducted by the Rev. Edward K. Ziegler of the Church of the Brethren. Mr. Ziegler served for a number of years as a missionary in India. He has written widely on the subject of worship in the rural church. He has arranged many worship services. He arranged several for the Convocation. He conducted these in a spirit appealing to all the persons with varied religious experience who attended the Convocation.

Hymns of the Rural Spirit, published by the National Council of Churches, was the hymnal used.

The Church and the Family Farm

FROM THE COMMISSION REPORT

• Four major problems concerning this subject were considered during the sessions of the commission. These dealt with the high cost of establishing a family on the farm; investment capital in large tracts of land which often displaces family-farm ownership; the growth of corporation farming; and the difficulty of passing the farm from generation to generation without loss to the farm owner.

The maintenance of the family-size farm is of deep concern to the church, and the church should try to keep as many people on the farm as the farms of the nation will support.

The members of the commission felt that a new stewardship of the land should be developed which will place upon the conscience of the land-owner the problem of passing his holdings on to his son or son-in-law or to some other Christian who will continue the relationship of the farm to the church. To sell a family farm, formerly occupied by a supporter of the church, to an absentee owner or to a non-churchman is poor stewardship. A careful education of farm families concerning proper means of transfer of real estate will help solve this problem.

The church should explore the possibilities of borrowing money from local and general credit agencies and keep the youth who wish to buy farms informed about the terms. Farmers who have no children should be helped to plan for the disposal of their land to church youth.

Intensive study should be given to the possibility of using church investment funds for the aid of young Christians who wish to become established on the land.

Each pastor should study his parish concerning the present and future ownership of farms in the community. Where it is apparent that a farm is to be sold on the open market, steps should be taken to save the farm from an investment buyer and to assist a family of the parish to make the purchase.

Other suggestions for approaches to the family-farm problem were: 1) Cooperative ownership of farm machinery; 2) a clearing-house, either state-wide or denomination-wide, to subsidize farm and rural business opportunities among people who are or will be members of the church; 3) renewed study, on the part of pastors, in the fields of rural economics and rural sociology; 4) increased cooperation with other agencies, such as the 4-H Club, Extension Service; 5) a renewed conception of stewardship of the land.

JOSEPH ACKERMAN, *Chairman*

In-Service Training

• Rural Church Center, Green Lake, Wisconsin, will hold its third interdenominational school for town and country ministers and their wives, April 9-16, 1953. This school is sponsored jointly by the Wisconsin Council of Churches, the Division of Home Missions of the National Council of Churches, and Rural Church Center. Requests for information regarding enrollment should be sent to the Wisconsin Council of Churches, Madison, Wisconsin. Ask for a registration blank and information as to what scholarship aid will be given by your denomination.

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The University of Kentucky will hold its sixteenth Rural Leadership Institute, April 14-15, 1953. Information concerning program and costs may be procured from Dr. Ralph J. Ramsey, Experiment Station, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Ky.

Pennsylvania State College

• A Religious Radio Workshop has been scheduled for Pennsylvania State College, June 15-19, 1953. This venture will be particularly designed for rural ministers. Voice recordings and evaluations will be made for each participant. Microphone technique, devotional program content, the goals of broadcasting—these and other presentations are being planned. The group will listen to what other local ministers are doing. For further informa tion and application blanks, writ Professor William Mather, State Col lege, Pennsylvania. The Worksho is being sponsored by the Broadcas ing and Film Commission of th National Council of Churches.

One Great Hour of Sharing

• The purpose of "One Great Hou of Sharing," the 1953 United Appea for relief and reconstruction, is t raise funds for refugee and relie needs, for inter-church aid and othe related types of service.

The 1953 United Appeal will hav India, Korea, the Near East and Cen tral Europe as its chief areas of cov erage. Programs of emergency relie and programs of rehabilitation an reconstruction in the areas of dis tress are financed through the Unite Appeal.

The Central Department o Church World Service, of the Na tional Council of the Churches o Christ in the U.S.A., 120 East 23r Street, New York 10, N. Y., is the of ficial sponsor of the United Appea

Contributions to the United Ap peal will be collected through regu lar denominational channels, wit allocations then being made fo Church World Service-approve projects and for denominational re lief and reconstruction work. I some cases, as with communit churches and over the radio an television, contributions will be di rected to Church World Service, i addition to the denominationa channels.

Sunday, March 8, will be the da on which most churches will tak their "One Great Hour of Sharing offerings.

Correction

• We wish to correct an error whic occurred on page 15 of the Januar issue of this journal. In the thir paragraph of the first column, th last sentence should have been "The Department of the Town an Country Church is now one of th two departments in the Division o Home Missions of the Nationa Council of Churches."